## INNER TUBE

### Games-manship Continues

While most of the television industry has focused on Turner Broadcasting's TNT and ESPN as likely candidates to pick up a portion of the 1996 Summer Olympics from Atlanta, other outside contenders could be the USA Network and HBO. Yesterday **Dick Ebersol**, president of NBC Sports, which won the rights to the 1996 Games with a $456 million bid, said Turner executives were adamant that Turner be paid to carry any portion of the Games. "Unless they're willing to put up some money to share the risk, we can't do this," Ebersol told reporters. For the Barcelona Summer Games in 1992, NBC created the Olympic Triplecast, a three-channel pay-per-view package that turned into a nightmare. This time out, the company is looking for a network to share the risk, and in return, get a piece of the advertising revenues. HBO is also a contender. Ebersol said after Labor Day the network would be willing to talk to any cable outlet interested in the games. A decision could come by November. A marriage with ESPN would be difficult, he said, because ABC owns 80% of the sports network. Ebersol predicted the network could make "in excess of $10 million" on the Games.

— **Richard Huff**

### Snyder Re-Ups With CNBC

Cable's CNBC has re-upped talk show host **Tom Snyder** in a deal that will keep the TV veteran on the network through January 1995. No word on salary, although Snyder reportedly has been making $500,000 a year. His show airs weeknights at 10 o'clock. Meanwhile, CNBC is reportedly also talking to **Geraldo Rivera** about hosting a talker for the network.

— **R.H.**

### Wardrobe by BBC

LOS ANGELES — **Russell Baker,** who takes over as host of "Masterpiece Theatre" Oct. 3 following the retirement of **Alistair Cooke,** told reporters here not to expect a lot of changes, although there will be a new opening credit sequence and a new set. "I suggested I might wear bib overalls and sit on a bale of hay," said the New York Times columnist, "but they're very devoted to the British style."

— **Eric Mink**

### Mirren, Mirren

LOS ANGELES — **Helen Mirren,** who now has wowed audiences with two "Prime Suspect" miniseries for Britain's Granada Television and PBS' "Mystery," has signed to do "Prime Suspect 3." Telecast in the U.S. is planned for next May. Last week, Mirren copped an Emmy nomination for best actress in a miniseries, and "Prime Suspect 2" was named a finalist in the best-miniseries category.

— **E.M.**

### Flood Aid

WNYW/Ch. 5 has opted to carry Flood Aid, a telethon designed to raise funds for Midwest flood victims. The station will dump "Studs" and "A Current Affair" starting at midnight tonight to carry the special. Station newsanchor **Lyn Brown** will provide local inserts for the telecast. The station is donating the airtime.

— **R.H.**

### Soaps to Reach Wider Audience

The CBS soaps "Guiding Light" and "As the World Turns" will soon sport closed captioning for deaf and hearing-impared viewers. "GL," seen from 3 to 4 p.m., is scheduled to begin captioning Monday, while "ATWT," which airs from 2 to 3 p.m., will debut its captioning Aug. 16.

— **Christy Slewinski**

### Dots All . . .

Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen is on tonight's "Moneyline with Lou Dobbs," CNN at 7 o'clock. . . . Comedy Central unveils the fist of nine new episodes of its award-winning improvisational series, "Whose Line Is It, Anyway," tonight at 9:30. . . . **Sam Donaldson** further investigates government waste on tonight's "PrimeTime Live," (ABC 10-11 p.m.) while correspondent **Sylvia Chase** interviews **Kenny** and **Reitha Lakeberg,** an Indiana couple who must decide whether to let doctors proceed with a life-threatening operation to separate their 3½-week-old Siamese twins. . . . High-heeled private eyes are setting their sights on cheating husbands on "A Current Affair" (Ch. 5), tonight at 7.

# Cronkite is back in action

## His Discovery report probes 'Where We Fight'

DAVID BRINKLEY had to leave NBC, the network of his initial and resonant fame, in order to present even more thoughtful work on ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley" — where his decades of experience were regarded more as assets than liabilities.

Walter Cronkite, who retired from CBS in 1981, at age 64, to make room for Dan Rather in the "CBS Evening News" anchor chair, also has discovered a new lease on journalistic life — at the Discovery Channel.

**DAVID BIANCULLI**

Tonight at 10, that cable network presents the second quarterly edition of "The Cronkite Report." This one, subtitled "Where We Fight," tackles nothing less than the history and future of American intervention in global affairs. And even without the ability to draw upon Cronkite's own work from the CBS archives, "Where We Fight" is a thorough, and thoroughly thought-provoking, study.

The documentary's title alludes to Frank Capra's "Why We Fight" documentaries, made during World War II under military auspices to convince raw recruits why the battle halfway across the world was so important. The connection, though, is never explained by Cronkite, who may feel it's either too obvious or obscure to mention.

Either way, it's the earliest indication of the type of wide perspective offered by Cronkite, whose experiences were shaped by that war — unlike, say, any of the occupants of the current evening news anchor chairs, or, for that matter, of the Oval Office.

Perhaps that's why there's so much weight and magnetism tonight in the sequence featuring Cronkite interviewing former President Jimmy Carter. When Cronkite remarks on the large number of civil wars presently being fought around the world, Carter instantly and passionately provides specifics.

"There are 32 civil wars now," he informs Cronkite. And when Carter criticizes the Reagan and Bush administrations for not exhausting peaceful solutions in such conflicts as Panama and Grenada, there's a sense he's not playing politics so much as looking toward the very near future.

"Where We Fight," produced by Irv Drasnin with reporting by Lee Townsend, presents historical clips and overviews, then gathers together some current and retired world-stage players (and samples street-level opinions from some citizens in Worthington, Ohio) to talk about America's role in Bosnia, Somalia and other international hot spots.

**WALTER CRONKITE:** Can't keep a good anchor down

The voices, for the most part, sound wary, if not weary. One speaks of "a new world disorder," another of "a worldwide epidemic of hatred, of misery, of conflict," and Cronkite himself asks, "Will we, the people, have a say in where we fight?"

At the end of the hour, after probing all the problems inherent in being the world's "one superpower," Cronkite proposes a possible solution: A joint session of congressional subcommittees, holding open hearings to discuss, determine and draft a declaration of American foreign policy.

That sort of forceful suggestion hasn't been voiced by a TV newsperson since . . . well, since John Chancellor stepped down from his commentary post at "The NBC Nightly News With Tom Brokaw" a few weeks ago. But as Brinkley and now Cronkite have proven, there's life, and wisdom, in the old boys yet.

# 'Law' takes more cues from news

**By ERIC MINK**
Daily News TV Critic

LOS ANGELES — In its upcoming season, episodes of NBC's New York-based "Law & Order" will again massage, tweak and twist reality for their arresting storylines, producers Rene Balcer and Michael Chernuchin and executive producer Dick Wolf told the Daily News:

**S. Epatha Merkerson**

■ In one episode, they said, Robert Klein plays the host of a sleazy TV talk show (is that redundant?) addressing child abuse. A discussion involving a mother, her child and the man who abused the kid disintegrates into chaos when the child's father shows up in the studio and shoots the abuser. The central question: To what degree is the talk-show host responsible for the shooting?

■ Another episode plays off the recent real-life spate of random shotgunnings in two Washington, D.C., neighborhoods. "Law & Order" writers have added racial dimensions: The victims were black, the suspect is white and James Earl Jones plays his defense lawyer.

■ One show takes its lead from the Mike Tyson rape case, transforming the accused from superstar athlete into superstar rock musician.

■ Yet another tells the story of a homeless man whose erratic behavior causes problems for the neighborhood where he spends much of his time. The show is based roughly on news accounts of a homeless man who, among other things, has vandalized cars on the upper West Side.

"Law & Order" writers generally work in Los Angeles, except when one of their specific scripts is in production. The shows actually are made in and around New York.

Other changes for the fall season include two new characters, a white female assistant district attorney named Claire Kincaid, played by Jill Hennessey, and a black police lieutenant, Anita Van Buren, played by S. Epatha Merkerson. They replace the cop played by Dan Florek and the prosecutor formerly played by Richard Brooks.